

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of Study**

Language is one important aspect of human life. It is not possible for human to be able to communicate well as for now without the existence of language. Regardless of its creation and origin, people are still studying on this aspect of human life. This is why branches of language study existed such as semantics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics etc. They are created by human being to understand more about the language. Specifically a language is an important tool for human being to deliver their thought and messages each other.

Communication and interaction also may happen anywhere and any time. People can communicate in the classroom, canteen, at home and in many other places. They also can share their ideas or opinions in many occasions, for example in a meeting. In such an event, all of the arguments, ideas or comments will be expressed by the meeting members. Moreover, automatically, the meeting members will apply linguistic strategies in their conversational interaction.

Tannen (1993: 31) says, there are five aspects of linguistic strategies. Those are indirectness, interruption, topic raising, silence, and adversative. In short, people may use those five aspects of linguistic strategies during their conversation. However, the dominant linguistic strategy that is used by individual people is

different. This may happen because of gender differences. In addition, they also have different ways of communicating.

Tannen (in Talbot, 2010: 92) also found that there are some differences in language that used in conversations between men and women. Men often feel that they are asked to solve a problem and give advice when they are talked to, especially when asked something, and women often do not want solutions or advice—but just a good (meaning silent) listener. Further, men tend to give orders, whereas women tend to use proposals to get their way, or in other words men are direct and women are indirect. In addition, Fishman (in Holmes and Mayerhoff, 2003: 530) states that in mixed-gender conversations, women were typically interrupted more often, for instance; they needed to devote greater effort than men to get attention for their topics; and in general, women conversationalists did not receive the same degree of verbal support as their male interlocutors.

Holmes (in Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert and Leap 2000: 229) says women and men talk differently. Research in Britain, America and New Zealand reveals similar gender-based pattern of discourse. Women appear cooperative, facilitate participant, demonstrating in variety of ways their concern for their conversational partners, while men to dominate the talking time, interrupt more often than women, and focus on the content of the interaction and the task in hand, at the expense of attention to their addressees.

The above different characteristics of men and women may influence their use of linguistic strategies during their conversation. Zimmerman (in Wardhaugh, 2006:

325) states that men are more likely than women to use interruption as a means of dominating and controlling an interaction. Women ask more questions than men, encourage others to speak, use more instances of „you“ and „we“, and do not protest as much as men when they are interrupted. On the other hand, men interrupt more, challenge, dispute, ignore others more, try to control what topics are discussed, and are inclined to make categorical statements. Therefore, from those statements, it can be concluded that men are more dominant in interrupting.

Wardaugh (2006: 322) states that men also have more control of the topic that is going to be discussed in their conversation. Men are more frequent in saying or telling a joke, or raising other topics while they are communicating with other people, whereas women tend to speak more about their family or their feelings. Therefore, it can be said that there are a number of differences in cross-sex communication. Moreover, by looking into and analyzing those male and female differences in the use of linguistic strategies, it will be very interesting to undertake *qualitative research* into these differences between male and female speakers in a meeting.

However, James and Clarke (in Wodak, 1997: 83) state there are not many differences between men and women in the number of interruptions in a workplace or seminars. Because of that statement, it means that there is a contradictive opinion of interruption used in gender communication. Therefore, in order to clarify this contradiction concerning linguistic strategies used by males and females, the present researcher will conduct an analysis of the linguistic strategy differences between male and female students in the SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak. Moreover, to provide a

focus and limitation to this study, this research will focus on the analysis of the linguistic strategies that are used by male and female students in an informal meeting that is conducted by them.

This research is conducted in an informal meeting because, as previously stated, the meeting participants, whether males or females, show or express their arguments, ideas and comments by using different linguistic strategies. Perhaps, some of them respond to someone's argument in an indirect way or remain silent.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This study is intended to analyze the conversational strategy differences between male and female students in the SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak, in a meeting. The focus of this research is on the conversational strategies used while they are stating or responding to an argument in an informal meeting. On the basis of this reflection, the description of the problems can be stated as follows:

1. What are the linguistic strategy differences used by male and female students of the SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak, while conducting an informal meeting?
2. What are the dominant linguistic strategies applied by male and female students of the SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak, during a conversational interaction in an informal meeting?

### **1.3 Scope of the Research**

This study is proposed to search, analyze, and describe the linguistic strategies applied by male and female students of SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak. The focus of this study is to analyze the linguistic strategies applied by male and female students of the SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak, in a meeting, and the linguistic strategy that is most frequently applied by them.

In this study, the researcher will record the cross-sex conversations that happen in a meeting conducted by male and female students in the SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak. There may also be different languages used in the meeting, such as English, Indonesian or Javanese.

### **1.4 Purposes of the Research**

#### **1. General Objective**

Generally, this research aims at investigating the linguistic strategies applied by male and female students of SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak, while they are conducting a meeting. The analysis is focused on the analysis of conversations in terms of linguistic strategies applied by the male and female students.

#### **2. Specific Objective**

This study is conducted in order to:

- a. Analyze the linguistic strategy differences used by male and female students of the SMK Muhammadiyah 02 Pagak, while conducting conversational interaction in a meeting.

- b. Identify the dominant linguistic strategies applied by the male and female students during a meeting.

### **1.5 Significance of the Research**

This research is expected to give an enhancement of perspective and scientific framework in the domains of language and gender. In addition, this study is conducted to investigate the differences of linguistic strategies which are applied by male and female students while conducting conversational interaction in a meeting.

Furthermore, this study is also expected to be beneficial for English teachers, students and other researchers.

1. This study is expected to be beneficial for the teacher. Through this study, teachers will understand that male and female students are different by looking at the linguistic strategies which are used during their conversational interactions. Therefore, teachers will know the way they speak and how to speak with them.
2. By reading this study, the students will get information about different linguistic strategies used by male and female students. Therefore, the students will be able to build a good communication with their opposite sex friends.
3. Other researchers wishing to study the same problem, or doing further investigations into male and female language differences, this study could be used as a reference.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstandings about this study, and to provide a clear perspective about what this study is concern with, some terminologies being used are defined as follows:

### 1. Gender

The word gender often refers to the sexual distinction between females and males. In the social sciences, gender emphasizes a social, cultural, or psychological dimension. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 10) state that gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do - something we perform. In addition, Wodak (in Wardaugh, 2006: 313) says that gender is not a pool of attributes “possessed” by a person, but something a person “does”. In line with those statements, Wardaugh (2006: 313) states that gender is a social construct (but one heavily grounded in sex) involving the whole gamut of genetic, psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females.

Therefore, gender can be stated as someone’s actions and behavior which appears naturally. Moreover, having a different gender means that they perform and act differently in their social interactions. People of a different gender will have a different psychological dimension, this will influence how they perform in their social life, behaviors and language in their everyday life.

## 2. Linguistic Strategy

Tannen (in Cameron, 1998: 265) states linguistic strategy is used to mark power, or domination, in face-to-face interaction. There are five linguistic strategies proposed by Tannen, these being indirectness, interruption, silence, topic raising and adversative.

Moreover, it also can be said that linguistic strategy is a strategy that is commonly used by participants in a conversational interaction. It also can be used to discover the domination in face-to-face conversational interaction.

Linguistic strategy is a strategy that is commonly used by participants in a conversational interaction. It can also be used to discover domination in face-to-face conversational interaction. In this study, the researcher will analyze the five aspects of linguistic strategies which are used by male and female students while conducting a meeting. The domination in conversational interaction can be seen by looking at the different linguistic strategies used by male and female students.